



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 2501404
Applicant Name: Don Johnson, for Seattle Parks Department
Address of Proposal: 1618 E Calhoun Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit to establish use for future expansion and construction, alteration and addition to an existing institution ("Montlake Community Center") in an environmentally critical area. The project includes the removal of two temporary modular buildings totaling 2,500 sq. ft., together with approximately 6,350 sq. ft. of new construction, for a net increase of 3,900 sq. ft., to an existing gymnasium. Parking for 38 vehicles is currently located on site; no change in parking is proposed.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Conditional Use - To expand an institution in a Single Family zone
(SMC Chapter 23.44.022)

SEPA – for conditioning only (SMC Chapter 25.05)

Exemption from Shoreline Substantial Development Permit requirements
(SMC 23.60.062)

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS* ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS
 ☐ DNS with conditions
 ☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition
 or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

*A Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) was issued by Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation on May 25, 2005. DPD will consider and impose any necessary SEPA conditioning.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

Montlake Community Center is located between 16th and 19th Avenue East in the Montlake neighborhood. The community center is part of a 26 acre playfield, with Portage Bay to the north and west, E. Calhoun Street to the south and W. Montlake Place to the east. State Rout 520 follows the shoreline immediately north of the playfield area. A small parking area takes access off E. Calhoun Street and is located toward the southwest portion of the site. Immediately to the east of the parking area are tennis courts. Directly to the east of the tennis courts is the “Tudor Annex,” a 1 ½ story Tudor revival “shelter house” completed in 1936. North of the shelter house is a gymnasium constructed in 1976, with a large children’s play area to its east. Further to the east lies a baseball diamond and north of that, in the northeast quadrant of the site, a combination football/soccer field enclosed by a running track. West of the gymnasium are two modular structures which will be removed to provide space for the addition contained in this proposal.

The site is located in Single Family 5000 zone (SF5000) and the areas to the east and south of the playfield are thickly developed with single family residences.

Topographically, the Montlake neighborhood occupies a relatively low-lying area of land at the base of the northern end of Capitol Hill. The area is generally flat, lower than the residentially developed areas to the south and east, with slight downward slopes at the north and west margins where the site becomes the shoreline and subducts the sloughs and joined waters of Lakes Union and Washington.

Project Description

Master Use Permit to establish use for future alteration of and expansion to an existing institution (“Montlake Community Center”) in an environmentally critical area. The project includes the removal of two temporary modular buildings totaling 2500 sq. ft., together with approximately 6,350 sq. ft. of new construction, for a net increase of 3,900 sq. ft., to an existing gymnasium. New construction will include a new dividable multi-purpose community hall with an adjoining kitchen, new activity area, restrooms, storage space and administrative offices. A portion of the existing gymnasium will be remodeled to provide viewing areas to the gym area, a family lounge and a family shower room.

Parking for 38 vehicles is currently located on site; no change in parking is proposed. No alterations or additions are proposed for the “Tudor Shelter House,” also known as the “Tudor Annex,” which is a City of Seattle Historic Landmark. Although the Tudor Revival building is part of the community center, it is a separate structure and not affected by this permit. A determination of Non-significance and environmental documents were prepared by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.



Public Comment

No written comments regarding the project were received during the public comment period, which ended on July 6, 2005.

ANALYSIS—ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation wishes to add a new multi-purpose community hall with support spaces (including kitchen and restrooms) and new support spaces for the existing gymnasium. 3,900 net square feet of new space will be added to provide for an expanded Montlake Community Center.

The Community Center would continue to serve its intended target population, the broader surrounding Montlake community, with a variety of programs, including classes, teen camps, after-school programs, community meetings, youth and adult sports programs. The maximum staff level is expected to be 5 employees with a general average occupant load of 45 people.

The Land Use Code allows the expansion of existing institutions in residential zones through the administrative conditional use process. This proposal is subject to the development standards outlined in section 23.44.008 through 23.44.016 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). The director's decision has the authority to approve, condition or deny a conditional use application. This decision shall be based on whether the proposed use will be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property. In addition to the general single family development standards institutions are subject to the standards of SMC 23.44.022. The applicable criteria used for evaluating and or conditioning the applicant's proposal are discussed below.

D. General Provisions

New or expanding institutions in single family zones shall meet the development standards for uses permitted outright in Section 23.44.008 through 23.44.016 unless modified elsewhere in this subsection or in a Major Institution Master Plan.

According to the plans submitted with the application, the proposal meets the applicable development standards enunciated in Section 23.44.008 through 23.44.016.

E. Dispersion

The lot line of any proposed new or expanding institution, other than child care centers locating in legally established institutions, shall be located six hundred feet (600') or more from any lot line of any other institution in a residential zone, with certain exceptions.

The lot lines of this institution are within 600 feet of the Montlake Elementary School. The school was constructed in 1924. The Community Center and playfield were established at this location, in part at least, as established by the historical record, to service the students from the other institution (see “Report on Designation, Montlake Community Center,” The City of Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board, 2005.) Admittedly, the existing centrifugal clustering of school, playfields and community center follows a pattern that runs counter to the centripetal ideal and policy seemingly expressed as the desideratum in the current Land Use Code. The clustering of such neighborhood amenities, however, is a venerable historical pattern in Seattle and one which has been in place in this neighborhood for a considerable period and is one which is generally regarded to have served many neighborhoods in the city well.

Although non-conforming with regards the dispersion criterion, the Montlake Community Center is located approximately 600 lineal feet northwest of the southeastern boundary of the park. The park offers a substantial buffer of open area between the surrounding residential development and the community center and topographically lies within a bowl with the surrounding residential areas rising above the park. This creates a significant separation from neighboring residential properties and the community center’s location within the larger open space of the park enables the intent of the dispersion criteria to be achieved.

F. Demolition of Residential Structures

No residential structure shall be demolished nor shall its use be changed to provide for parking.

Demolition of residential structures is not proposed for parking; therefore, this criterion is not applicable.

G. Reuse of Existing Structures

Existing structures may be converted to institution use if the yard requirements for institutions are met.

The proposal is for new construction.

H. Noise and Odors

For the purpose of reducing potential noise and odor impacts, the Director shall consider the location on the lot of the proposed institution, on-site parking, outdoor recreational area, trash and refuse storage areas, ventilating mechanisms, sport facilities, and other noise generating and odor-generating equipment, fixtures or facilities. The institution shall be designed and operated in compliance with the Noise Ordinance, Chapter 25.08.

The proposed institutional expansion in the single family zone is not expected to generate significant increased noise and odors. None of the activities proposed as part of the typical use of the site will exceed the maximum permissible sound levels as established and modified in the SMC Chapter 25.08.

I. Landscaping

Landscaping shall be required to integrate the institution with adjacent areas, reduce the potential for erosion or extensive stormwater runoff, screen parking from adjacent residentially zoned lots or streets or to reduce the appearance of bulk of the institution.

The overall landscape design proposed for this expansion has been planned to blend with the existing landscaping characterized by dense plantings and mature trees which is already present on site. In order to construct the gym addition portions of an existing pedestrian pathway will be re-graded and repaved to meet accessibility standards. The applicants have proposed a modicum of landscaping to blend with existing landscaping in order to integrate the proposed addition with its surroundings and to sufficiently buffer it both from the street and from adjacent park uses.

J. Light and Glare

Exterior lighting shall be shielded or directed away from adjacent residentially zoned lots.

All exterior lighting will be directed downward to minimize light and glare on neighboring park uses.

K. Bulk and Siting

1. *Lot Area. If the proposed site is more than one (1) acre in size, the Director may require the following and similar development standards:*

a. *For lots with unusual configuration or uneven boundaries, the proposed principal structures be located so that changes in potential and existing development patterns on the block or blocks within which the institution is located are kept to a minimum.*

b. *For lots with large street frontage in relationship to their size, the proposed institution reflect design and architectural features associated with adjacent residentially zoned block faces in order to provide continuity of the block front and to integrate the proposed structures with residential structures.*

Montlake Playfield in which the Montlake Community Center is located is 27 acres in size. The proposed addition will be not be taller than the existing gymnasium and is roughly comparable in width. The existing gymnasium structure is situated in such a way to preserve the architectural integrity and character of this portion of the existing community center, with a minimal increase in bulk and scale. The

proposed addition sits well back from E. Calhoun Street and the City of Seattle designated landmark Tudor Revival shelter house remains the predominate face of the community center complex fronting the street

2. *Yards. Yards of institutions shall be as required for uses permitted outright in Section 23.44.008, provided that no such structure other than freestanding walls fences, bulkheads or similar structures shall be closer than ten feet (10') to the side lot line. The Director may permit yards less than ten feet (10') but not less than five feet (5') after finding that the reduced setback will not significantly increase impacts, including but not limited to noise, odor and comparative scale, to adjacent lots zoned residential and there will be a demonstrable public benefit.*

The proposed addition meets and exceeds applicable yard requirements for the single-family zone and does not request any reduced setbacks. The site presents a continuous front yard along E. Calhoun Street in excess of the required 20-foot front yard of a single-family zone. Given its location within the park the community center addition does not affect any other yards as it not near any property lines.

3. *Height Limit.*

a. *A religious symbol and that portion of the roof supporting it, including but not limited to a belfry or spire, may be extended an additional twenty-five feet (25') above the height limit.*

b. *For gymnasiums and auditoriums that are accessory to an institution the maximum height shall be thirty-five (35) feet if portions of the structure above thirty-five (35) feet are set back at least twenty (20) feet from all property lines. Pitched roofs on a gymnasium or auditorium which have a slope of not less than three to twelve (3:12) may extend ten (10) feet above the thirty-five (35) foot height limit. No portion of a shed roof on a gymnasium or an auditorium shall be permitted to extend beyond the thirty-five (35) foot height limit under this provision.*

The proposed addition to the gymnasium meets the development standards listed above. The proposed 1-story addition to the gym will have a maximum height within the height limits for the zone.

4. *Facade Scale. If any facade of a new or expanding institution exceeds thirty feet (30') in length, the Director may require that facades adjacent to the street or a residentially zoned lot be developed with design features intended to minimize the appearance of the bulk. Design features which may be required include, but are not limited to, modulation, architectural features, landscaping or increased yards.*

The proposed addition is not adjacent a street or residentially zoned lot.

L. Parking and Loading Berth Requirements

SMC 23.44.022.L provides that the Director may modify the parking and loading requirements of Section 23.54.15, required parking, and the requirements of Section 23.44.016, parking location and access, on a case by case basis using the information

contained in the transportation plan prepared pursuant to Subsection M of this section. The modification shall be based on adopted City Policies and shall:

- i. Provide a demonstrable public benefit such as, but not limited to, reduction of traffic on residential streets, preservation of residential structures, and reduction of noise, odor, light and glare; and*
- ii. Not cause undue traffic through residential streets nor create a serious safety hazard.*

Parking for 38 vehicles is currently located on site; no change in parking is proposed. No modification of the parking or loading requirements of SMC 23.54.015 or 23.44.016 is being requested.

M. Transportation Plan

A transportation plan shall be required for proposed new institutions and for those institutions proposing expansions which are larger than four thousand (4,000) square feet of the structure area and/or required to provide twenty (20) or more spaces.

The net increase of the proposed expansion of the existing institution is 3,900 square feet. A Traffic Impact Study was prepared as part of the Master Use Permit submittal. No Transportation Plan is required.

DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

The conditional use application is **APPROVED**.

CONDITIONS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

None.

Exemption from Shoreline Substantial Development Permit Requirements

A portion of the development site lies within the Urban Residential Environment of the Shoreline District. The applicant has requested a Shoreline Exemption (Application No. 2503458) for reconstructive work to provide an accessible sidewalk extending between the parking lot and the gym addition and also to extend an existing 6-inch fire line to the proposed addition. The portion of the proposed work that lies within the Shoreline District has been reviewed for consistency through the Shoreline Exemption request process. A determination of consistency with the regulations of SMC 23.60 (Shoreline District) has been made and an Exemption from Shoreline Substantial Development Permit Requirements was granted on November 2, 2005.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the annotated environmental checklist dated April 18th, 2005, and supplemental information in the project file submitted by the applicant. The information in the checklist, the supplemental information, and the experience of the lead agency with the review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, and certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced, may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states, in part, “Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation” subject to some limitations. Under such limitations or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D) mitigation can be considered. Short-term and long-term adverse impacts are anticipated from the proposal.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: 1) temporary soil erosion; 2) disturbance of birds occupying or utilizing the site); 3) increased noise, dust and vibration from construction operations and equipment; 4) increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel; 5) tracking of mud onto adjacent street from construction personnel; 6) intermittent conflicts with traffic adjacent to the site from construction vehicles; and 7) consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope (Section 25.05.794, SMC). Although not significant, the impacts are adverse and for that reason are addressed by City Codes and/or ordinances, and State of Washington regulations, specifically:

- Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way during construction, construction along the street right-of-way, and sidewalk repair)
- Building Code (construction measures in general)
- Stormwater, Drainage and Grading Code (temporary soil erosion)

Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation. Further mitigation by imposing specific conditions is not necessary for these impacts. The Department finds, however, that certain construction-related impacts may not be adequately mitigated by existing ordinances. Further discussion is set forth below.

Long-term Impacts

Potential long-term impacts that may occur as a result of this project include increased bulk and scale of the building, an increase in ambient noise due to increased human play activity, and increased energy consumption. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope and are otherwise mitigated by project design constraints. Other long-term impacts, including traffic impacts on surrounding streets and peak parking demand require further comment and analysis.

Parking and Traffic

According to the Traffic Impact Study prepared for the project by CTS Engineers (March, 2005) normal operations associated with the addition to the existing Montlake Community Center are not expected to cause undue traffic through nearby residential streets, are not expected to alter the Level of Service (LOS) at identified key intersections which will continue to operate at LOS A and B, nor will they create any serious safety hazards. Furthermore, adequate parking for normal events is expected to be accommodated within the existing parking area striped for 38 vehicles, with adequate backup capacity available in nearby on-street parking that is not fully utilized.

Other impacts not noted here as mitigated by codes or conditions, such as increased ambient noise and minor disturbance to local and migratory birds, are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by conditioning.

Summary

In conclusion, several effects on the environment would result from the proposed development. Existing codes and policies successfully address these effects on the built and natural environment. Both short term and long term impacts will be sufficiently mitigated by the limited duration of construction and the design of the project.

DECISION-SEPA

The proposal is **APPROVED**.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

None.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: November 7, 2005

Michael Dorcy, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development
Land Use Services